



Via email

July 16, 2013

Dr. Susan Hedman
Region 5 Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507
Susan.hedman@epa.gov

Dear Dr. Hedman,

I am honored to write on behalf of the Sierra Club and its 20,000 members across the state of Illinois and I am particularly humbled to write on behalf of the residents of the Central Illinois communities of Peoria, Pekin, and Bartonville, who continue to speak out about the impact air pollution from Ameren's E.D. Edwards and Midwest Generation's Powerton plant has on their families and neighbors. I urge you to act expeditiously to finalize area designations across Illinois and Region 5 for the 2010 1-hour Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) to ensure communities like those in Central Illinois can look forward to cleaner, healthier air.

I have heard you speak passionately about air quality and the importance of implementing the Clean Air Act to ensure safe air. You and I were both speakers at the *Wisconsin Public Utility Institute* meeting in January 2012 here in Madison. I recall your passion as you described the lives that would be saved by EPA's air quality regulations, designed to reduce emissions from the most polluting sources and to ensure residents of communities like those in Central Illinois could literally breathe easier. I sheepishly took the podium later that afternoon and had to admit that as the "environmental group" representative I planned to talk not about public health, but about the economics of pollution controls. Luckily, your presentation provided a foundation that I returned to many times throughout my talk to ground my points in the significant public health and environmental impacts that are at stake in the work we do.

There is much at stake in Central Illinois when it comes to fully implementing EPA's 2010 1-hour SO₂ NAAQS. By June 3, 2013 EPA was supposed to finalize initial area designations for this standard, identifying especially the most dangerous air and putting states like Illinois on a path toward developing a plan to bring air quality "into attainment" through meaningful and permanent pollution reductions. Coal-fired power plants are Illinois' largest source of SO₂ emissions. In the Chicagoland region, Midwest Generation operates four coal-fired power plants and not one controls its sulfur dioxide emissions despite readily available and widely used pollution controls that can reduce SO₂ pollution by 98%. In Central Illinois, Ameren's E.D. Edwards plant and Midwest Generation's Powerton plant both pollute the local community and neither company has invested in life-saving controls to reduce this pollution.

The state of Illinois and U.S. EPA already determined that several coal-fired power plants across the state contribute to unsafe air, including the E.D. Edwards and Powerton plants in Central Illinois. In fact, community members were thrilled when EPA specifically proposed to include the Edwards plant in its non-attainment area designation due to the plant's SO₂ impact on the Pekin area.¹ Sierra Club's own analysis, which uses EPA's methodology for air quality modeling, concludes that there are even larger swaths of Illinois where residents are threatened with unsafe levels of pollution from coal-fired power plants than what EPA has currently identified as appropriate for non-attainment designation. I am enclosing that analysis with this letter.

The residents of communities like Bartonville, Pekin, and Peoria should not have to wait another day for clean air and they urge you to act to finalize a non-attainment designation. Last week, frustrated by a lack of commitment from Ameren or Midwest Generation to clean up their coal plants, community activists stood outside of the Edwards plant, asking EPA to finalize the nonattainment designation, and asking the companies to finalize a plan to reduce pollution. As **Robin Garlish**, Pekin resident and mother of asthmatic children said last week:

"No parent should have to watch their child wheeze and gasp for air, but so many parents in the Peoria area are put in that position every day due to the high levels of asthma-causing sulfur dioxide emissions from the Edwards coal-fired power plant. Clean air is a priority for every family, and protecting our air should be a priority for our state and national leaders."

The healthy air event held in front of the Edwards plant last week received great media coverage and it captured the passion of the community to make Central Illinois a healthier place to live, recreate, and raise families.² According to the 2000 census, 51,000 people live within five miles of the Edwards plant, with even more living within five miles of the Powerton plant. In Illinois alone, approximately 735,000 people live within five miles of a coal-fired power plant with almost all of those living near a plant that does not have modern controls on SO₂ emissions.

¹ Letter from Susan Hedman to Patrick Quinn. February 6, 2013.
http://www.epa.gov/so2designations/eparesp/05_IL_resp.pdf

On behalf of the residents of Central Illinois whose wellbeing depends on clean air, I urge you to finalize initial area designations across the state of Illinois for the 1-hour SO₂ NAAQS as expeditiously as possible to start in motion a long overdue plan to reduce harmful air pollution from coal-fired power plants and other large sources of SO₂.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Holly Bressett".

Holly Bressett
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CC: George Czerniak

Enclosures